

[Ec. 1961]

THE PRESIDENTS SAY

The Center (NETRC) has announced that it will shortly open a Washington office!

This announcement may remind some of the story of the young Abe Lincoln, who in providing an inventory report of household goods to be offered for sale, enumerated them as follows: 1 stool with leg missing, 1 chair with seat out, and one rifle that might be worth looking into.

Let's do some looking into it - together. Is a Center Washington office a gun at our head? Or is it an additional arm, close at hand, to help carry on a common campaign?

The Center's move to open an office in the nation's capital is based on its growing realization of a need for expert on-the-spot emergency and staff help to serve its network stations and to provide for its own service of information upon which to base Center positions; the immediate stimulus for activating the office is the up-coming modification of the JCET. (See "Washington Report")

The intention of the Center to come to Washington has provoked a number of concerns - and conferences. Was this encroachment? Would it mean unproductive conflict and wasteful competition? Who's to do what? And to whom? Or with whom?

The Center people agreed fully and it was in this mood of mutuality that the discussion was carried on. The results, I believe, were a much better understanding of our respective purposes, agreements on coincidental approaches and activities, and a shared determination to make a real effort toward not mere peaceful co-existence, but purposeful co-effort.

Now, let me reassure some. I am fully aware of the risks of riding a tiger or lifting the tent flap for a camel. And NAEB, despite its willingness to cooperate, is equally determined to adhere to certain principles and have care for certain concerns. The NAEB, whose principal resource is people, has a responsibility to see to it that the mobilization of effort in use of the new media in the service of education remains subject to democratic control. There is a deep feeling in the association that these instruments in careless or unskilled hands or in control of those who would exploit them for ignoble purpose or special advantage can be most dangerous. It will always be our obligation as a grass-roots bastion to see to it that these miracle devices are responsibly used as powerful forces for enlightenment.

However, we would be derelict if we did not explore all reasonable possibilities for organizational cooperation. No one group can do the job alone. Realizing the ~~xxxxxxmakes~~ the sense it makes to coordinate common efforts, the NAEB chose to make this matter the occasion for a fresh approach to NAEB-NETRC relationships. A day-long meeting was held January 19 of officers of both agencies to (1) establish a common ground for understanding and cooperation and (2) develop a joint plan for reallocation of former JCET staff services.

I opened the meeting by reminding everyone that our initiation of this meeting was in keeping with NAEB's traditional position of doing whatever it can to foster the best interests of educational broadcasting, regardless of its possible impact on the association. The NAEB is a self-help organization in which we "associate ourselves to promote, by united effort and mutual cooperation, the dissemination of knowledge, information and education to the end that . . . benefits of broadcasting may be extended to all. If others are better able and more competent to carry out certain aspects of this purpose, more power to them. The NAEB role in organizing the JCET and blueprinting the Center testify to this consistent attitude. Moreover, that the present officers of NAEB believe the needs of our nation transcend the Association and personal consideration.

In our view, the time had come to forget ~~all~~ petty jealousies and old wounds and get on with the job - mobilizing our efforts toward common goals by developing a unified, coordinated, mutually-supporting modus vivendi within the general frame of a network and trade association relationship. As Loren Stone expressed it, it was time to stop thinking in terms of "us" and "them" and think, instead, of "we". What are we going to do?

A diversity of organizations is needed. But so is recognition of the necessity for yielding of some sovereignty by all to the common effort. NAEB reaffirms its offer to cooperate with all groups and all states who are resolved that these tools are to be used for the benefit of humanity and who are resolved that individual differences between them must yield to these higher needs.

If the tandem harness with NETRC does not work out, another Lincoln story may be appropriate. A letter from General McClellan telling him how to the country reminded him, Lincoln said, of the Irishman whose horse kicked up and caught a foot in the stirrup.

"Arrah!" said he. "If you're going to get on, I'll get off."

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